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sixty feet in diameter. The whole structure was of stone, laid in a most careful and workmanlike manner. In the valley of the Gila are found abandoned buildings of a character distinct from those of the Chaco, together with remains of pottery, conduits for irrigation, and other relics of a numerous agricultural population.

Mr. Bancroft concludes his first volume with an extended account of the wild tribes of Mexico and Central America. His next volume will be devoted to the civilized nations of the same countries, and, to judge from proof-sheets which we have seen, it will be of surpassing interest and value. The third volume will be devoted to the mythology and languages of nations both savage and civilized; the fourth, to antiquities and architectural remains; and the fifth, to aboriginal history and migrations, and to an Index to the whole work. We can only say that if these remaining volumes are executed in the same spirit of candid and careful investigation, the same untiring industry and intelligent good sense, which mark the volume before us, Mr. Bancroft's "*Native Races of the Pacific States*" will form, as regards aboriginal America, an encyclopædia of knowledge not only unequalled, but unapproached. A literary enterprise more deserving of a generous sympathy and support has never been undertaken on this side of the Atlantic.

FRANCIS PARKMAN.

ART. III. — *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America.* By HENRY WILSON. Vols. I. and II. pp. 670 and 720. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co. 1874.

On the first day of January, 1832, when the American Anti-slavery Society was formed in the office of Samuel E. Sewall in Boston, the abolition of slavery through any such agency seemed impossible. Almost all the great interests of the country were combined to defend and sustain the system. The capital invested in slaves amounted to at least one thousand millions of dollars. This vast pecuniary interest was

rapidly increasing by the growing demand for the cotton crop of the Southern States, — a demand which continually overlapped the supply. The whole political power of the thirteen slave States was in the hands of the slaveholders. No white man in the South, unless he was a slaveholder, was ever elected to Congress, or to any important political position at home. The two great parties, Whig and Democrat, were pledged to the support of slavery in all its constitutional rights, and vied with each other in giving to these the largest interpretation. By a constitutional provision, which could not be altered, the slave States had in Congress, in 1840, twenty-five more Representatives in proportion to their number of voters than the free States. By the cohesion of this great political and pecuniary interest the slaveholders, though comparatively few in number, were able to govern the nation. The Presidents, both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court of the United States, the two great political parties, the press of the country, the mercantile interest, and that mysterious force which we call society, were virtually in the hands of the slaveholders. Whenever their privileges were attacked, all these powers rallied to their defence. Public opinion, in the highest circles of society and in the lowest, was perfectly agreed on this one question. The saloons of the Fifth Avenue and the mob of the Five Points were equally loyal to the sacred cause of slavery. Thus all the great powers which control free states were combined for its defence; and the attempt to assail this institution might justly be regarded as madness. In fact, all danger seemed so remote, that even so late as 1840 it was common for slaveholders to admit that property in man was an absurdity and an injustice. The system itself was so secure, that they could afford to concede its principle to their opponents. Just as men formerly fought duels as a matter of course, while frankly admitting that it was wrong to do so, — just as at the present time we concede that war is absurd and unchristian, but yet go to war continually, because we know no other way of settling international disputes, — so the slaveholders used to say, "Slavery is wrong; we know that: but how is it to be abolished? What can we do about it?"

Such was the state of things in the United States less than

half a century ago. On one side was an enormous pecuniary interest, vast political power, the weight of the press, an almost unanimous public opinion, the necessities of commerce, the authority of fashion, the teachings of nearly every denomination in the Christian Church, and the moral obligations attributed to the sacred covenants of the fathers of the Republic. On the other side there were only a few voices crying in the wilderness, "It is unjust to claim property in man." The object of the work before us is to show how, after the slave power had reached this summit of influence, it lost it all in a single generation; how, less by the zeal of its opponents than by the madness of its defenders, this enormous fabric of oppression was undermined and overthrown; and how, in a few years, the insignificant handful of antislavery people brought to their side the great majority of the nation.

Certainly a work which should do justice to such a history would be one of the most interesting books ever written. For in this series of events everything was involved which touches most nearly the mind, the conscience, the imagination, and the heart of man. How many radical problems in statesmanship, in political economy, in ethics, in philosophy, in theology, in history, in science, came up for discussion during this long controversy! What pathetic stories of suffering, what separation of families, what tales of torture, what cruelty grown into a custom, what awful depths of misery, came continually to light, as though the judgment-day was beginning to dawn on the dark places of the earth! What romances of adventure, what stories of courage and endurance, of ingenuity in contrivance, of determination of soul, were listened to by breathless audiences as related by the humble lips of the fugitives from bondage! How trite and meagre became all the commonplaces of oratory before the flaming eloquence of these terrible facts! How tame grew all the conventional rhetoric of pulpit and platform, by the side of speech vitalized by the immediate presence of this majestic argument! The book which should reproduce the antislavery history of those thirty years would possess an unimagined charm.

We cannot say that Mr. Wilson's volumes do all this, nor had we any right to expect it. He proposes to himself noth-

ing of the sort. What he gives us is, however, of very great value. It is a very carefully collected, clearly arranged, and accurate account of the rise and progress, decline and catastrophe, of slavery in the United States. Mr. Wilson does not attempt to be philosophical like Bancroft and Draper; nor are his pages as picturesque as are those of Motley and Carlyle. He tells us a plain unvarnished tale, the interest of which is to be found in the statement of the facts exactly as they occurred. Considering that it is a story of events all of which he saw and a large part of which he was, there is a singular absence of prejudice. He is no man's enemy. He has passed through the fire, and there is no smell of smoke on his garments. An intelligent indignation against the crimes committed in defence of the system he describes pervades his narrative. His impartiality is not indifference, but an absence of personal rancor. Individuals and their conduct are criticised only so far as is necessary to make clear the course of events and the condition of public feeling. The defenders of slavery at the North and South are regarded, not as bad men, but as the outcome of a bad system.

Mr. Wilson's book is a treasury of facts, and will never be superseded so far as this peculiar value is concerned. In this respect it somewhat resembles Hildreth's History of the United States. Taking little space for speculation, comment, or picturesque coloring, they have all the more room left for the steady flow of the narrative.

With a few unimportant omissions, the two volumes now published contain a full history of slavery and antislavery from the Ordinance of 1787 and the compromises of the Constitution down to the election of Lincoln and the outbreak of the civil war. As a work of reference they are invaluable, for each event in the long struggle for freedom is distinctly and accurately told, while the calm story advances through its various stages. Instead of following this narrative in detail, which our space will not allow, we prefer to call our readers' attention to some of the more striking incidents of this great revolution.

Our fathers, when they founded the nation, had little thought that slavery was ever to attain such vast extension.

They supposed that it would gradually die out from the South, as it had disappeared from the North. Yet the whole danger to their work lay here. Slavery, if anything, was the wedge which was to split the Union asunder. When the Constitution was formed, in 1787, the slaveholders, by dint of great effort, succeeded in getting the little end of the wedge inserted. It was very narrow, a mere sharp line, and it went in only a very little way ; so it seemed to be nothing at all. The slaveholders at that time did not contend that slavery was right or good. They admitted that it was a political evil. They confessed, many of them, that it was a moral evil. All the great Southern revolutionary bodies had accustomed themselves to believe in the rights of man, in the principles of humanity, in the blessings of liberty ; and they could not *defend* slavery. Mason of Virginia, in the debates in the Federal Convention, denounced slavery and the slave-trade. "The evil of slavery," said he, "affects the whole Union. Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when done by slaves. They prevent the immigration of whites, who really enrich a country. They produce the most pernicious effects on the manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven on a country." Williamson of North Carolina declared himself in principle and practice opposed to slavery. Madison "thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man." But the extreme Southern States, South Carolina and Georgia, insisted on the right of importing slaves, at least for a little while ; and so they were allowed to import them for twenty years. They also insisted on having their slaves represented by themselves in Congress, and so they were allowed to count three fifths of the slaves in determining the ratio. This seemed a small thing, but it was the entering of the wedge. It was tolerating the principle of slavery ; not admitting it, but tolerating it. At the same time that this Convention was forming the Federal Constitution Congress was prohibiting slavery in all the territory northwest of the Ohio. This prohibition of slavery was adopted by the unanimous votes of the eight States present, including Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

Two years later it was recognized and confirmed by the first Congress under the Constitution. Jefferson, a commissioner to revise the statute law of Virginia, prepared a bill for gradual emancipation in that State. In 1790 a petition was presented to Congress, signed by Benjamin Franklin, the last public act of his life, declaring equal liberty to be the birthright of all, and asking Congress to "devise means for restoring liberty to the slaves, and so removing this inconsistency from the character of the American people." In 1804 the people of Virginia petitioned Congress to have the Ordinance of 1787 suspended, that they might hold slaves; but a committee of Congress, of which John Randolph of Virginia was chairman, reported that it would be "highly dangerous and inexpedient to impair a provision wisely calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of the Northwest Territory."

But in 1820 the first heavy blow came on the wedge to drive it into the log. The Union is a tough log, and the wedge could be driven a good way in without splitting it; but the first blow which drove it in was the adopting the Missouri Compromise, and allowing slavery to come North and take possession of Missouri.

The thirty years of prosperity which had followed the adoption of the Constitution had changed the feelings of men both North and South. The ideas of the Revolution had receded into the background; the thirst for wealth and power had taken their place. So the Southern States, which had cordially agreed thirty years before to prohibit the extension of slavery, and had readily admitted it to be a political evil, now demanded as a right the privilege of carrying slaves into Missouri. They threatened to dissolve the Union, talked of a fire only to be extinguished by seas of blood, and proposed to hang a member from New Hampshire who spoke of liberty. Some of the Northern men were not frightened by these threats, and valued them at their real worth. But we know the result was a compromise. Slavery was to take possession of Missouri, on condition that no other State as far north as Missouri should be slaveholding. Slavery was to be excluded from the rest of the territory forever. This bargain was applauded and justified by Southern politicians and newspapers

as a great triumph on their part ; and it was. The wedge had received a heavy blow, and was driven a long distance into the log. That fatal compromise was a surrender of principle for the sake of peace, bartering conscience for quiet ; and we were soon to reap the bitter fruits of it.

Face to face, in deadly opposition, each determined on the total destruction of his antagonist, stood this Goliath of the slave power and the little David of antislavery, at the beginning of the ten years which extended from 1830 to 1840. The giant was ultimately to fall from the wounds of his minute opponent, but not during this decade or the next. For many years each of the parties to the conflict was growing stronger, and the fight was growing fiercer. Organization on the one side was continually becoming more powerful ; enthusiasm on the other continually built up a more determined opinion. The slave power won repeated victories ; but every victory increased the number and ardor of its opponents.

The first attempt to destroy antislavery principles was by means of mobs. Mobs seldom take place in a community unless where the upper stratum of society and the lowest are in sympathetic opposition to some struggling minority. Then the lower class takes its convictions from the higher, and regards itself as the hand executing what the head thinks ought to be done. Respectability denounces the victim, and the rabble hastens to take vengeance on him. Even a mob cannot act efficiently unless inspired by ideas ; and these it must receive from some higher source. So it was when Priestley was mobbed at Birmingham ; so it was when Wesley and his friends were mobbed in all parts of England. So it was also in America when the office of the " Philanthropist " was destroyed in Cincinnati ; when halls and churches were burned in Philadelphia ; when Miss Crandall was mobbed in Connecticut ; when Lovejoy was killed at Alton. Antislavery meetings were so often invaded by rioters, that on one occasion Stephen S. Foster is reported to have declared that the speakers were not doing their duty, because the people listened so quietly. " If we were doing our duty," said he, " they would be throwing brickbats at us." These demonstrations only roused and intensified the ardor of the Abolitionists, while bringing to their

side those who loved fair play, and those in whom the element of battle was strong. Mobs also were an excellent advertisement for the Antislavery Society; and this is what every new cause needs most for its extension. Every time that one of their meetings was violently broken up, every time that any outrage or injury was offered to the Abolitionists, all the newspapers in the land gave them a gratuitous advertisement by conspicuous notices of the event. So the public mind was directed to the question, and curiosity was excited. The anti-slavery conventions were more crowded from day to day, their journals were more in demand, and their plans and opinions became the subject of conversation everywhere.

And certainly there could be no more interesting place to visit than one of these meetings of the Antislavery Society. With untiring assiduity they brought to their platform everything which could excite and impress their audience. Their orators were of every kind,—rough men and shrill-voiced women, polished speakers from the universities, stammering fugitives from slavery, philosophers and fanatics, atheists and Christian ministers, wise men who had been made mad by oppression, and babes in intellect to whom God had revealed some of the noblest truths. They murdered the King's English, they uttered glaring fallacies, the blows aimed at evil-doers often glanced aside and hit good men. Invective was, perhaps, the too frequent staple of their argument, and any difference of opinion would be apt to turn their weapons against each other. This church-militant often became a church-termagant. Yet, after all such abatement for errors of judgment or bad taste, their meetings were a splendid arena on which was fought one of the greatest battles for mankind. The eloquence we heard there was not of the schools, and had nothing artificial about it. It followed the rule of Demosthenes, and was all directed to action. Every word was a blow. There was no respect for dignities or authorities. The Constitution of the United States, the object of such unfeigned idolatry to the average American, was denounced as "a covenant with hell." The great men of the nation, Webster, Clay, Jackson, Lyman Beecher, were usually selected as the objects of the severest censure. The rule was

to strike at the heads which rose above the crowd, as deserving the sternest condemnation. Presidents and governors, heads of universities, eminent divines, great churches and denominations, were convicted as traitors to the right, or held up to unsparing ridicule. No conventional proprieties were regarded in the terrible earnestness of this enraged speech. It was like the lava pouring from the depths of the earth, and melting the very rocks which opposed its resistless course.

Of course this fierce attack roused as fierce a defence. One extreme generated the other. The cry for "immediate abolition" was answered by labored defences of slavery itself. Formerly its advocates only excused it as a necessary evil; now they began to defend it as a positive good. Then was seen the lamentable sight of Christian ministers and respected divines hurrying to the support of the "sum of all villanies." The Episcopal bishop of a New England State defended with ardor the system of slavery as an institution supported by the Bible and commanded by God himself. The president of a New England college declared slavery to be a positive institution of revealed religion, and not inconsistent with the law of love. The minister of a Boston church, going to the South for his health, amused his leisure by writing a book on slavery, in which it is made to appear as a rose-colored and delightful institution, and its opposers are severely censured. One of the most learned professors in a Massachusetts theological school composed a treatise to refute the heresy of the higher law, and to maintain the duty of returning fugitive slaves to bondage. Under such guidance it was natural that the churches should generally stand aloof from the Abolitionists and condemn their course. It was equally natural that the Abolitionists should then denounce the churches as the bulwark of slavery. Nevertheless, from the Christian body came most of those who devoted their lives to the extirpation of this great evil and iniquity. And Mr. Garrison, at least, always maintained that his converts were most likely to be made among those whose consciences had been educated by the Church and the Bible.

From public meetings in the North, the conflict of ideas next extended itself to the floor of Congress, where it con-

tinued to rage during nearly thirty years, until "the war of tongue and pen" changed to that of charging squadrons, the storm of shot and the roll of cannon. The question found its way into the debates of Congress in the form of petitions for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. If the slaveholders had allowed these petitions to be received and referred, taking no notice of them, it seems probable that no important results would have followed. But, blinded by rage and fear, they opposed their reception, thus denying a privilege belonging to all mankind, — that of asking the government to redress their grievances. Then came to the front a man already eminent by his descent, his great attainments, his long public service, his great position, and his commanding ability. John Quincy Adams, after having been President of the United States, accepted a seat in the House of Representatives, and was one of the most laborious and useful of its members. He was not then an Abolitionist, nor in favor even of abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia. But he believed that the people had the right to petition the government for anything they desired, and that their respectful petitions should be respectfully received. Sixty-five years old in 1832, when he began this conflict, his warfare with the slave power ended only when, struck with death while in his seat, he saw the last of earth and was content. With what energy, what dauntless courage, what untiring industry, what matchless powers of argument, what inexhaustible resources of knowledge, he pursued his object, the future historian of the struggle who can fully paint what Mr. Wilson is only able to indicate, will take pleasure in describing. One scene will remain forever memorable as one of the most striking triumphs of human oratory; and this we must describe a little more fully.

February 6, 1837, being the day for presenting petitions, Mr. Adams had already presented several petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia (a measure to which he was himself then opposed), when he proceeded to state* that he had in his possession a paper upon which he wished the decision of the Speaker. The paper, he said, came

* Congressional Globe for February 6, 1837.

from twenty persons declaring themselves to be slaves. He wished to know whether the Speaker would consider this paper as coming under the rule of the House.* The Chair said he would take the advice of the House on that question. And thereupon commenced a storm of indignation which raged around Mr. Adams during four days.† Considering that the House had ordered, less than three weeks before, that all papers relating *in any way* to slavery should be laid on the table without any action being taken on them, this four days' discussion about such a paper, ending in the passing of several resolutions, was rather an amusing illustration of the irrepressible character of the antislavery movement. The Southern members seemed at first astonished at what they hastily assumed to be an attempt of Mr. Adams to introduce a petition from slaves. One moved that it be not received. Another, indignant at such a tame way of meeting the question, declared that any one attempting to introduce such a petition should be immediately punished; and if that was not done at once, all the members from the slave States should leave the House. Loud cries arose, "Expel him! expel him!" Mr. Alford declared that the petition ought to be burned. Mr. Waddy Thompson of South Carolina, who soon received a castigation which he little anticipated, moved that John Quincy Adams, having committed a gross disrespect to the House in attempting to introduce a petition from slaves, ought to be instantly brought to the bar of the House to receive the severe censure of the Speaker. Similar resolutions were offered by Mr. Haynes and Mr. Lewis, all assuming that Mr. Adams had attempted to introduce this petition. He at last took the floor, and said that he thought the time of the House was being consumed needlessly, since all these resolutions were founded on an error. He had *not* attempted to present the petition,—he had only asked the Speaker a question in regard to it. He also advised the member from Alabama to amend his resolution, which stated the petition to be for the abolition of slavery in the District, whereas it was the very

* Rule adopted January 18th, that all petitions relating to slavery be laid on the table without any action being taken on them.

† February 6, 7, 9, and 11.

reverse of that. It was a petition for something which would be very objectionable to himself, though it might be the very thing which the gentleman from Alabama was contending for. Then Mr. Adams sat down, leaving his opponents more angry than ever, but somewhat confused in their minds. They could not very well censure him for doing what he had not done, but they wished very much to censure him. So Mr. Waddy Thompson modified his resolution, making it state that Mr. Adams, "by creating the impression, and leaving the House under the impression, that the petition was for the abolition of slavery," had trifled with the House, and should receive its censure. After a multitude of other speeches from the enraged Southern chivalry, the debate of the first day came to an end.

On the next day (February 7), in reply to a question, Mr. Adams stated again that he had not attempted to present the petition, though his own feelings would have led him to do so, but had kept it in his possession, out of respect to the House. He had said nothing to lead the House to infer that this petition was for the abolition of slavery. He should consider before presenting a petition from slaves; though, in his opinion, slaves had a right to petition, and the mere fact of a petition being from slaves would not of itself prevent him from presenting it. If the petition was a proper one, he should present it. A petition was a prayer, a supplication to a superior being. Slaves might pray to God: was this House so superior that it could not condescend to hear a prayer from those to whom the Almighty listened? He ended by saying that, in asking the question of the Speaker, he had intended to show the greatest respect to the House, and had not the least purpose of trifling with it.

These brief remarks of Mr. Adams made it necessary for the slaveholders again to change their tactics. Mr. Dromgoole of Virginia now brought forward his famous resolution, which Mr. Adams afterwards made so ridiculous, accusing him of having "given color to an idea" that slaves had a right to petition, and that he should be censured by the Speaker for this act. Another member proposed, rather late in the day, that a committee be appointed to inquire whether any attempt had been made, or not, to offer a petition from slaves. Another

offered a series of resolutions, declaring that if any one "hereafter" should offer petitions from slaves he ought to be regarded as an enemy of the South, and of the Union; but that "as John Quincy Adams had stated that he meant no disrespect to the House, that all proceedings as to his conduct should now cease." And so, after many other speeches, the second day's debate came to an end.

The next day was set apart to count the votes for President, and so the debate was resumed February 9. It soon became more confused than ever. Motions were made to lay the resolutions on the table; they were withdrawn; they were renewed; they were voted down; and, finally, after much discussion, and when at last the final question was about being taken, Mr. Adams inquired whether he was to be allowed to be heard in his own defence before being condemned. So he obtained the floor, and immediately the whole aspect of the case was changed. During three days he had been the prisoner at the bar; suddenly he became the judge on the bench. Never, in the history of forensic eloquence, has a single speech effected a greater change in the purpose of a deliberative assembly. Often as the Horatian description has been quoted of the just man, tenacious of his purpose, who fears not the rage of citizens clamoring for what is wrong, it has never found a fitter application than to the unshaken mind of John Quincy Adams, standing alone, in the midst of his antagonists, like a solid monument which the idle storms beat against in vain.

He began by saying that he had been waiting during these three days for an answer to the question which he had put to the Speaker, and which the Speaker had put to the House, but which the House had not yet answered, namely, whether the paper he held in his hand came under the rule of the House, or not. They had discussed everything else, but had not answered that question. They had wasted the time of the House in considering how they could censure him for doing what he had not done. All he wished to know was, whether a petition from slaves should be received or not. He himself thought that it ought to be received; but if the House decided otherwise, he should not present it. Only one gentleman had undertaken to discuss that question, and his argument was, that

if slavery was abolished by Congress in any State, you violated the Constitution ; and, *therefore*, slaves ought not to be allowed to petition for anything. He, Mr. Adams, was unable to see the connection between the premises and the conclusion.

(Hereupon poor Mr. French, the author of this argument, tried to explain what he meant by it, but left his meaning as confused as before.)

Then Mr. Adams added, that if you deprived any one in the community of the right of petition, which was only the right of offering a prayer, you would find it difficult to know where to stop ; one gentleman had objected to the reception of one petition, because offered by women of a bad character. Mr. Patton of Virginia says he *knows* that one of the names is of a woman of a bad character. *How does he know it ?*

(Hereupon Mr. Patton explained that he did not himself know the woman, but had been told that her character was not good.)

So, said Mr. Adams, you first deny the right of petition to slaves, then to free people of color, and then you inquire into the moral character of a petitioner before you receive his petition. The next step will be to inquire into the political belief of the petitioners before you receive their petition. Mr. Robertson of Virginia had said that no petitions ought to be received for an object which Congress had no power to grant. Mr. Adams replied, with much acuteness, that on most questions the right of granting the petition might be in doubt : a majority must decide that point : it would therefore follow, from Mr. Robertson's rule, that no one had a right to petition unless he belonged to the predominant party. Mr. Adams then turned to Mr. Dromgoole, who had charged him with the remarkable crime of "giving color to an idea," and soon made that Representative of the Old Dominion appear very ridiculous.

Mr. Adams then proceeded to rebuke, with dignity but severity, the conduct of those who had proposed to censure him without any correct knowledge of the facts of the case. His criticisms had the effect of compelling these gentlemen to excuse themselves and to offer various explanations of their mistakes. These assailants suddenly found themselves in an

attitude of self-defence. Mr. Adams graciously accepted their explanations, advising them in future to be careful when they undertook to offer resolutions of censure. He then informed Mr. Waddy Thompson of South Carolina that he had one or two questions to put to him. By this time it had become a pretty serious business to receive the attentions of Mr. Adams ; and Mr. Waddy Thompson immediately rose to explain. But Mr. Adams asked him to wait until he had fully stated the question which Mr. Thompson was to answer. This Southern statesman had threatened the ex-President of the United States with an indictment by the grand jury of the District for words spoken in debate in the House of Representatives, and had added that, if the petition was presented, Mr. Adams would be sent to the penitentiary. "Sir," said Mr. Adams, "the only answer I make to such a threat from that gentleman is, to invite him, when he returns to his constituents, to study a little the first principles of civil liberty." He then called on a gentleman from the slave States to say how many of them indorsed that sentiment. "*I do not*," said Mr. Underwood of Kentucky. "*I do not*," said Mr. Wise of Virginia. Mr. Thompson was compelled to attempt another explanation, and said he meant that, in *South Carolina*, any member of the Legislature who should present a petition from slaves could be indicted. "Then," replied Mr. Adams, and this produced a great sensation, "if it is the law of South Carolina that members of her Legislature may be indicted by juries for words spoken in debate, God Almighty receive my thanks that I am not a citizen of South Carolina."

Mr. Adams ended his speech by declaring that the honor of the House of Representatives was always regarded by him as a sacred sentiment, and that he would feel a censure from that House as the heaviest misfortune of a long life, checkered as it had been by many vicissitudes.

When Mr. Adams began his defence, not only was a large majority of the House opposed to his course, but they had brought themselves by a series of violent harangues into a condition of bitter excitement against him. When he ended, the effect of this extraordinary speech was such, that all the resolutions were rejected, and out of the whole House only

twenty-two members could be found to pass a vote of even indirect censure. The victory was won, and won by Mr. Adams almost single-handed. We count Horatius Cocles a hero for holding the Roman bridge against a host of enemies ; but greater honors belong to him who successfully defends against overwhelming numbers the ancient safeguards of public liberty. For this reason we have repeated here at such length the story of three days, which the people of the United States ought always to remember. It took ten years to accomplish the actual repeal of these gag-laws. But the main work was done when the right of speech was obtained for the friends of freedom in Congress ; and John Quincy Adams was the great leader in this warfare. He was joined on that arena by other noble champions, — Giddings, Mann, Palfrey, John P. Hale, Chase, Seward, Slade of Vermont, Julian of Indiana. Others no less devoted followed them, among whom came from Massachusetts Charles Sumner and Henry Wilson, the author of the present work. What he cannot properly say of himself should be said for him. Though an accomplished and eager politician, Henry Wilson has never sacrificed any great principle for the sake of political success. His services to the anti-slavery cause have been invaluable, his labors in that cause unremitting. Personal feelings and personal interests he has been ready to sacrifice for the sake of the cause. Loyal to his friends, he has not been bitter to his opponents ; and if any man who fought through that long struggle was to be its historian, no one will deny the claims of Mr. Wilson to that honor.

Under the lead of John Quincy Adams, the power to discuss the whole subject of slavery in the National Legislature was won, and never again lost. This was the second triumph of the antislavery movement ; its first was the power won by Garrison and his friends of discussing the subject before the people. The wolfish mob in the cities and in Congress might continue to howl, but it had lost its claws and teeth. But now came the first great triumph of the slave power, in the annexation of Texas. This was a cruel blow to the friends of freedom. It was more serious because the motive of annexation was openly announced, and the issue distinctly presented in

the Presidential election. Mr. Upshur, Tyler's Secretary of State, in an official despatch, declared that the annexation of Texas was necessary to secure the institution of slavery. The Democratic Convention which nominated Mr. Polk for the Presidency deliberately made the annexation of Texas the leading feature of its platform. Nor was the slave power in this movement merely opposed by the antislavery feeling of the country. Southern senators helped to defeat the measure when first presented in the form of a treaty by Mr. Tyler's administration. Nearly the whole Whig party was opposed to it. The candidate of the Whigs, Henry Clay, had publicly declared that annexation would be a great evil to the nation. Twenty members of Congress, with John Quincy Adams at their head, had proclaimed in an address to their constituents that it would be equivalent to a dissolution of the Union. Dr. Channing, in 1848, had said that it would be better for the nation to perish than to commit such an outrageous wrong. Edward Everett, in 1837, spoke of annexation as "an enormous crime." Whig and Democratic legislatures had repeatedly denounced it. In 1843, when the Democrats had a majority in the Massachusetts Legislature, they resolved that "under no circumstances whatever" could the people of Massachusetts approve of annexation. Martin Van Buren opposed it as unjust to Mexico. Senator Benton, though previously in favor of the measure, in a speech in Missouri declared that the object of those who were favoring the scheme was to dissolve the Union, though he afterward came again to its support. And yet when the Presidential campaign was in progress, a torchlight Democratic procession miles long was seen marching through the streets of Boston, and flaunting the lone star of Texas along its whole line. And when Polk was elected, and the decision of the nation virtually given for this scheme, it seemed almost hopeless to contend longer against such a triumph of slavery. If the people of the North could submit to this outrage, it appeared as if they could submit to anything.

Such, however, was not the case. On one side the slave power was greatly strengthened by the admission of Texas to the Union as a slave State; but, on the other hand, there

came a large accession to the antislavery body. And this continued to be the case during many years. The slave power won a succession of political victories, each of which was a moral victory to its opponents. Many who were not converted to antislavery by the annexation of Texas in 1845 were brought over by the defeat of the Wilmot Proviso and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. Many who were not alarmed by these successes of slavery were convinced of the danger when they beheld the actual working of the Fugitive-Slave Act. How many Boston gentlemen, before opposed to the Abolitionists, were brought suddenly to their side when they saw the Court House in chains, and were prevented by soldiers guarding Anthony Burns from going to their banks or insurance offices in State Street! All those bitter hours of defeat and disaster planted the seeds of a greater harvest for freedom. Others who remained insensible to the disgrace of the slave laws of 1850 were recruited to the ranks of freedom by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854. This last act, Mr. Wilson justly says, did more than any other to arouse the North, and convince it of the desperate encroachments of slavery. Men who tamely acquiesced in *this* great wrong were startled into moral life by the murderous assault on Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks in 1856. Those who could submit to this were roused by the border ruffians from Missouri who invaded Kansas, and made the proslavery Constitution for that State. The Dred Scott decision in 1857, which declared slavery to be no local institution, limited to a single part of the land, but having a right to exist in the free States under the Constitution, alarmed even those who had been insensible to the previous aggressions of slavery. This series of political successes of the slave power were appalling. Every principle of liberty, every restraint on despotism, was overthrown in succession, until the whole power of the nation had fallen into the hands of an oligarchy of between three and four hundred thousand slaveholders. But every one of their political victories was a moral defeat; every access to their strength as an organization added an immense force to the public opinion opposed to them; and each of their successes was responded to by some advance of

the antislavery movement. The annexation of Texas in 1845 was answered by the appearance of John P. Hale, in 1847, in the United States Senate,—the first man who was elected to that body on distinctly antislavery grounds and independent of either of the great parties. The response to the defeat of the Wilmot Proviso and passage of the Fugitive-Slave Law in 1850 was the election of Charles Sumner to the Senate in April, 1851, and the establishment of the underground railroad in all the free States. When the South abrogated the Missouri Compromise, the North replied by the initiation of the Republican party. The Kansas outrages gave to freedom John Brown of Ossawatimie. And the answer to the Dred Scott decision was the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. Till that moment the forces of freedom and slavery had stood opposed, like two great armies, each receiving constant recruits and an accession of new power. On one side, hitherto, had been all the political triumphs, and on the other all the moral accessions. But with this first great political success of their opponents the slave power became wholly demoralized, gave up the conflict, threw away the results of all their former victories, and abandoned the field to their enemies, plunging into the dark abyss of secession and civil war.

And yet, what was the issue involved in that election? It was simply whether slavery should or should not be extended into new Territories. All that the Republican party demanded was this, that slavery should not be extended. It did not dream of abolishing slavery in the slave States. We remember how long, after the war began, we refused to do this. The Southerners had every guaranty they could desire that they should not be interfered with at home. If they had gracefully acquiesced in the decision of the majority, their institution might have flourished for another century. The Fugitive-Slave Law would have been repealed; or, at all events, trial by jury would have been given to the man claimed as a fugitive. But no attempt would have been made by the Republican party to interfere with slavery in the slave States, for that party did not believe it had the right to do so.

But, in truth, the course of the Southern leaders illustrated in a striking way the distinction between a politician and

a statesman. They were very acute politicians, trained in all the tactics of their art; but they were poor statesmen, incapable of any large strategic plan of action. As statesmen, they should have made arrangements for the gradual abolition of slavery, as an institution incapable of sustaining itself in civilized countries in the nineteenth century. Or, if they wished to maintain it as long as possible, they ought to have seen that this could only be accomplished by preserving the support of the interests and the public opinion of the North. Alliance with the Northern States was their only security; and, therefore, they ought to have kept the Northern conscience on their side by a loyal adherence to all compacts and covenants. Instead of this, they contrived to outrage, one by one, every feeling of honor, every sentiment of duty, and every vested right of the free States, until, at last, it became plain to all that it was an "irrepressible conflict," and must be settled definitely either for slavery or for freedom. When this point was reached by the American people, they also saw that it could not be settled in favor of slavery, for no concession would satisfy the slaveholders, and no contract they might make could be depended on. The North gave them, in 1850, the Fugitive-Slave Law for the sake of peace. Did it get peace? No. It relinquished, for the sake of peace, the Wilmot Proviso. Was the South satisfied? No. In 1853 Mr. Douglas offered it the Nebraska Bill. Was it contented? By no means. Mr. Pierce and Mr. Buchanan did their best to give them Kansas. Did they content the South by their efforts? No. Mr. Douglas, Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Buchanan were all set aside by the South. The Lecompton Bill was not enough. The Dred Scott decision was not enough. They demanded that slavery should be established by a positive act of Congress in all the Territories of the Union. Even Judge Douglas shrunk aghast from the enterprise of giving them such a law as that; and so Judge Douglas was immediately thrown aside. Thus, by the folly of the Southern leaders themselves, more than by the efforts of their opponents, the majority was obtained by the Republicans in the election of 1860.

But during this conflict there came many very dark days for freedom. One of these was after the passage of the Fugitive-

Slave Law in 1850. That law was one of a series of compromises, intended to make a final settlement of the question and to silence all antislavery agitation. Although defended by great lawyers, who thought it necessary to save the Union, there is little doubt but that it was as unconstitutional as it was cruel. The Constitution declares that "no person shall be deprived of his liberty without due process of law," and also that "in suits at common law, when the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved." A colored man, like Anthony Burns, was in full possession of his liberty; he was a self-supporting, tax-paying citizen of Massachusetts; and in ten days, by the action of the Fugitive-Slave Law, he was turned into a slave under the decision of a United States commissioner, without seeing a judge or a jury. The passage of this law, and its actual enforcement, caused great excitement among the free colored people at the North, as well as among the fugitives from slavery. No one was safe. It was evident that it was meant to be enforced,—it was not meant to be idle thunder. But instead of discouraging the friends of freedom, it roused them to greater activity. More fugitives than ever came from the slave States, and the underground railroad was in fuller activity than before. The methods employed by fugitives to escape were very various and ingenious. One man was brought away in a packing-box. Another clung to the lower side of the guard of a steamer, washed by water at every roll of the vessel. One well-known case was that of Ellen Crafts, who came from Georgia disguised as a young Southern gentleman, attended by her husband as her body-servant. She rode in the cars, sitting near Southerners who knew her, but did not recognize her in this costume, and at last arrived safe in Philadelphia. In one instance a slave escaped from Kentucky, with all his family, walking some distance on stilts, in order to leave no scent for the pursuing blood-hounds. When these poor people reached the North, and told their stories on the antislavery platform, they excited great sympathy, which was not confined to professed antislavery people. A United States commissioner, who might be called on to return fugitives to bondage, frequently had them concealed in his own

house, by the action of his wife, whose generous heart never wearied in this work, and who was the means of saving many from bondage. A Democratic United States marshal, in Boston, whose duty it was to arrest fugitive slaves, was in the habit of telling the slave-owner who called on him for assistance that he "did not know anything about niggers, but he would find out where the man was from those who did." Whereupon he would go directly to Mr. Garrison's office and tell him he wanted to arrest such or such a man, a fugitive from slavery. "But," said he, "curiously enough, the next thing I heard would be, that the fellow was in Canada." And when they were actually sent back to slavery, as in the case of Burns, the event excited so much sympathy with the fugitive, and so much horror of the law, that its effects were disastrous to the slave power. Thomas M. Simms was arrested in Boston as a fugitive from slavery, April 3, 1851, and was sent to slavery by the decision of George Ticknor Curtis, a United States commissioner. The answer to this act, by Massachusetts, was the election of Charles Sumner, twenty-one days after, to the United States Senate. Anthony Burns was returned to slavery by order of Edward G. Loring, in May, 1854; and Massachusetts responded by removing him from his office as Judge of Probate, and refusing his confirmation as a professor in Harvard University.

The passage of what were called the compromise measures of 1850, including the Fugitive-Slave Law, had, it was fondly believed, put an end to the whole antislavery agitation. The two great parties, Whig and Democrat, had agreed that such should be the case. The great leaders, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, Cass and Buchanan, were active in calling on the people to subdue their prejudices for freedom. Southern fire-eaters, like Toombs and Alexander Stephens, joined these Union-savers, and became apostles of peace. Agitation was the only evil, and agitation must now come to an end. Public meetings were held in the large cities, — one in Castle Garden in New York, another in Faneuil Hall in Boston. In these meetings the lion and the lamb lay down together. Rufus Choate and Benjamin Hallett joined in demanding that all antislavery agitation should now cease. The Church was

called upon to assist in the work of Union-saving, and many leading divines lent their aid in this attempt to silence those who desired that the oppressed should go free, and who wished to break every yoke. Many seemed to suppose that all anti-slavery agitation was definitely suppressed. President Fillmore called the compromise measures "a final adjustment." All the powers which control human opinion — the two great political parties, the secular and religious newspapers, the large churches and popular divines, the merchants and lawyers — had agreed that the antislavery agitation should now cease.*

But just at that moment, when the darkness was the deepest, and all the great powers in the Church and State had decreed that there should be no more said concerning American slavery, the voice of a woman broke the silence, and American slavery became the one subject of discussion throughout the world. "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*" was written by Mrs. Stowe for the "*National Era*," Dr. Bailey's paper in Washington. It was intended to be a short story, running through two or three numbers of the journal, and she was to receive a hundred dollars for writing it. But as she wrote the fire burned in her soul, a great inspiration came over her, and not knowing what she was about to do, she moved the hearts of men on two continents to their very depths. After it had appeared in the newspaper, she offered it as a novel to several publishers, who refused it. Accepted at last, it had a circulation unprecedented in the annals of literature. In eight weeks its sale had reached one hundred thousand copies in the United States, while in England a million copies were sold within the year.

* The writer of this article recalls a scene which occurred in his presence in the United States Senate early in 1851. Mr. Clay was speaking of the antislavery agitators and of the Free-Soil party, and said, with much bitterness, "We have put them down, — down, — down, where they will remain; down to a place so low, that they can never get up again." John P. Hale, never at a loss for a reply, immediately arose and said, "The senator from Kentucky says that I and my friends have been put down, — down, — down, where we shall have to stay. It may be so. Indeed, if the senator says so, I am afraid it *must* be so. For, if there is any good authority on this subject, any man who knows by his own personal and constant experience what it is to be put down, and to be kept down, it is the honorable senator from Kentucky." Mr. Clay's aspirations had been so often baffled, that this was a very keen thrust. The writer spoke to Mr. Hale shortly after, and he said, "I do not think Mr. Clay will forgive me that hit; but I could not help it. They may have got us down, but they shall not trample upon us."

On the European Continent the sale was equally immense. A single publisher in Paris issued five editions in a few weeks, and before the end of 1852 it was translated into Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Flemish, German, Polish, and Magyar. To these were afterward added translations into Portuguese, Welsh, Russian, Arabic, and many other languages. For a time, it stopped the publication and sale of all other works ; and within a year or two from the day when the politicians had decided that no more should be said concerning American slavery, it had become the subject of conversation and discussion among millions.

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was published in 1852. Those were very dark hours in the great struggle for freedom. Who that shared them can ever forget the bitterness caused by the defection of Daniel Webster, and his 7th of March speech in 1850 ; by the passage of the Fugitive-Slave Law, which made the whole area of the free States a hunting-ground for the slaveholders ; and by the rejection of the Wilmot Proviso, which abandoned all the new territory to slavery ? This was followed by the election of Franklin Pierce as President in 1852, on a platform in which the Democratic party pledged itself to resist all agitation of the subject of slavery in Congress or outside of it. And in December, 1853, Stephen A. Douglas introduced his Nebraska Bill, which repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and opened all the territory heretofore secured to freedom to slaveholders and their slaves. This offer on the part of Mr. Douglas was a voluntary bid for the support of the slaveholders in the next Presidential election. And in spite of all protests from the North, all resistance by Democrats as well as their opponents, all arguments and appeals, this solemn agreement between the North and the South was violated, and every restriction on slavery removed. Nebraska and Kansas were organized as Territories, and the question of slavery left to local tribunals, or what was called “squatter sovereignty.”

The passage of this measure showed the vast political advance of the slave power in the country, and how greatly it had corrupted the political conscience of the nation. It also showed, to those who had eyes, that slavery was the wedge

which was to split the Union asunder. But there were in the North many persons who still thought that danger to the Union came rather from the *discussion* of slavery than from slavery itself. They supposed that if all opposition to slavery should cease, then there would be no more danger. The Abolitionists were the cause of all the peril; and the way to save the Union was to silence the Abolitionists. That, however, had been tried ineffectually when they were few and weak; and now it was too late, as these Union-savers ought to have seen.

Mr. Douglas and his supporters defended their cause by maintaining that the Missouri Compromise was not a contract, but a simple act of legislation, and they tauntingly asked, "Why, since antislavery men had always thought that compromise a bad thing, should they now object to its being repealed?" Even this sophism had its effect with some, who did not notice that Douglas's resolutions only repealed that half of the compromise which was favorable to freedom, while letting the other half remain. One part of the Act of 1820 was that Missouri should be admitted as a slave State; the other part was that all the rest of the territory should be forever free. Only the last part was now repealed. Missouri was left in the Union as a slave State. It was as if one wished you to sell him a horse for a hundred dollars. You think the animal worth a great deal more, and refuse. But being very much urged, you at last yield. The man takes the horse; but when the time comes to pay, he refuses to do so, and annuls the bargain, *still, however, keeping the horse*. When you complain of this, he says, "Why! I thought you pretended to be opposed to the bargain; why complain, then, because I have repealed it?"

The political advance now made by slavery will appear from the following facts:—

In 1797 the slave power only asked for life; it did not wish to extend itself; it united with the North in prohibiting its own extension into the Northwest Territory.

In 1820 it did wish to extend itself; it refused to be shut out of Missouri, but was willing that the rest of the territory should be always free.

In 1845 it insisted on extending itself by annexing Texas, but it admitted that it had no right to go into any Territory as far north as Missouri.

In 1850 it refused to be shut out of any of the new territory, and resisted the Wilmot Proviso ; but still confessed that it had no right to go into Kansas or Nebraska.

Five years after, by the efforts of Stephen A. Douglas and Franklin Pierce, it refused to be shut out of Kansas, and repealed the part of the Missouri Compromise which excluded it from that region. But, in order to accomplish this repeal, it took the plausible name of popular sovereignty, and claimed that the people should themselves decide whether they would have a slave State or a free State.

One additional step came. The people decided or were about to decide for freedom ; and then the slave power set aside its own doctrine of popular sovereignty and invaded the Territory with an army of Missourians, chose a Legislature for the people of Kansas composed of Missourians, who passed laws establishing slavery and punishing with fine and imprisonment any who should even speak against it.

The people of Kansas refused to obey these laws. They would have been slaves already if they had obeyed them. Then their own governor, appointed by our President, led an army of Missourians to destroy their towns and plunder and murder their people. Nothing was left them but to resist. They did resist manfully but prudently, and by a remarkable combination of courage and caution the people of the little free-state town of Lawrence succeeded in saving themselves from this danger without shedding a drop of blood. Men, women, and children were animated by the same heroic spirit. The women worked by the side of the men. The men were placed on the outposts as sentinels and ordered by their general not to fire as long as they could possibly avoid it. And these men stood on their posts, and allowed themselves to be shot at by the invaders, and did not return the fire. One man received two bullets through his hat, and was ready to fire if the enemy came nearer, but neither fired nor quitted his post. The men were brave and obedient to orders ; the women were resolute, sagacious, and prudent. So they escaped their first great danger.

But slavery does not give up its point so easily after one defeat. Preparations were made along the Missouri frontier for another invasion, conducted in a more military manner and by troops under better discipline. The free-state people of Kansas were to be exterminated. From week to week they were expecting an attack, and had to watch continually against it. After having worked all day the men were obliged to do military duty and stand guard all night. Men who lived four and five miles out from Lawrence got wood and water for their wives in the morning, left them a revolver with which to defend themselves, and went to Lawrence to do military duty, returning at night again.

If we had a writer gifted with the genius of Macaulay to describe the resistance of Kansas to the Federal authorities on one side and the Missouri invaders on the other, it would show as heroic courage and endurance as are related in the brilliant pages which tell of the defence of Londonderry. Their enemies were unscrupulous, knowing that they had nothing to fear from the government at Washington. Senator Atchison, formerly the presiding officer of the United States Senate, openly advised the people of Missouri to go and vote in Kansas. General Stringfellow told them to take their bowie-knives and exterminate every scoundrel who was tainted with Free-soilism or Abolitionism. The orders were obeyed. The first Legislature was elected by armed invaders from Missouri, and Buford with a regiment of Southern soldiers entered the Territory in 1856, and surrounded Lawrence. These troops, under Atchison, Buford, and Stringfellow, burned houses and hotels, and stole much property. Ossawatimie was sacked and burned, Leavenworth invaded and plundered, and free-state men were killed. A proslavery constitution formed by Missouri slaveholders was forced through Congress, but rejected by the people of Kansas, who at last gained possession of their own State by indomitable courage and patience. Four territorial governors, appointed by the President, selected from the Democratic party and favorable to the extension of slavery, were all converted to the cause of freedom by the sight of the outrages committed by the Missouri invaders.

Amid this scene of tumult arose a warrior on the side of

freedom destined to take his place with William Wallace and William Tell among the few names of patriots which are never forgotten. John Brown of Ossawattomie was one of those who, in these later days, have reproduced for us the almost forgotten type of the old Jewish hero and prophet. He was a man who believed in a God of justice, who believed in fighting fire with fire. He was one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, an austere man, a man absorbed in his ideas, fixed as fate in pursuing them. Yet his heart was full of tenderness, he had no feeling of revenge toward any, and he really lost his own life rather than risk the lives of others. While in Kansas he became a leader of men, a captain, equal to every exigency. The ruffians from Missouri found to their surprise that, before they could conquer Kansas, they had some real fighting to do, and must face Sharpe's rifles; and as soon as they understood this, their zeal for their cause was very much abated. In this struggle John Brown was being educated for that last extraordinary scene of his life, which has lifted up his name, and placed it in that body which Daniel O'Connell used to call "The order of Liberators." *

Out of these persecutions of free-state men in Kansas came the assault on Charles Sumner, for words spoken in debate. Charles Sumner was elected to the United States Senate in 1851. He found in Congress some strong champions of freedom. John Quincy Adams was gone; but Seward was there, and Chase, and John P. Hale, in the Senate; and Horace Mann, Giddings, and other true men in the House. Henry Wilson himself, always a loyal friend to Sumner, did not come till 1855. These men all differed from one another, and each possessed special gifts for his arduous work. They stood face to face with an imperious majority, accustomed to rule. They had only imperfect support at home,—people and press at the North had been demoralized by slavery. They must watch their words, be careful of what they said, control their emotions, maintain an equal temper. Something of the results of this discipline we think we perceive in the calm tone of Mr. Wilson's volumes, and the absence of passion in his narration. These men must give no occasion to the enemy to

* So O'Connell signed himself in an album belonging to John Howard Payne.

blaspheme, but be careful of their lips and their lives. Their gifts, we have said, were various. Seward was a politician, trained in all the intricate ways of New York party struggles; but he was also a thinker of no small power of penetration. He could see principles, but was too much disposed to sacrifice or postpone them to some supposed exigency of the hour. In his orations, when he spoke for mankind, his views were large; but in his politics he sometimes gave up to party his best-considered convictions. Thought and action he seemed to believe belonged to two spheres; in his thought he was often the broadest in his range of any of the Senate, but in action he was frequently tempted to temporize. Mr. Chase was a man of a different sort. He had no disposition to concede any of his views. A cautious man, he moved slowly; but when he had taken his position, he was not disposed to leave it. John P. Hale was admirable in reply. His retorts were rapid and keen, and yet were uttered so good-naturedly, and with so much wit, that it was difficult for his opponents to take offence. But Charles Sumner was "the noblest Roman of them all." With a more various culture, a higher tone of moral sentiment, he was also a learned student and a man of implacable opinions. He never could comprehend Mr. Seward's diplomacy, and probably Mr. Seward could never understand *his* inability to compromise. He was deficient in imagination and in tact; therefore he could not enter into the minds of others, and imperfectly understood them; and he never handled delicate topics very tenderly. But the purity of his soul and life, the childlike simplicity of his purposes, and the sweetness of his disposition, were very charming to those who knew him well. Add to this the resources of a mind stored with every kind of knowledge, and a memory which never forgot anything, and his very presence in Washington gave an added value to the place. He had seen men and cities, and was intimate with European celebrities, but yet was an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile. Fond of the good opinions of others, and well pleased with their approbation, he never sacrificed a conviction to win their praise or to avoid their censure. Certainly, he was one of the purest men who ever took part in American politics.

It was such a man as this, so gifted and adorned, so spotless and upright, who by the wise providence of God was permitted to be the victim of a brutal assassin. It was this noble head, the instrument of laborious thought for the public welfare, which was beaten and bruised by the club of a ruffian, on May 22, 1856. Loud was the triumph through the South, great the joy of the slave power. They had disabled, with cruel blows, their chief enemy. Little did they foresee—bad men never do foresee—that Charles Sumner was to return to his seat, and become a great power in the land long after their system had been crushed, and their proud States trampled into ruin by the heavy tread of Northern armies. They did not foresee that he was to be the trusted counsellor of Lincoln during those years of war; and that after they had been conquered, he would become one of their best friends in their great calamity, and repay their evil with good.

This murderous assault on Mr. Sumner cannot be considered as having strengthened the political position of the slave power. It was a great mistake in itself, and it was a greater mistake in being indorsed by such multitudes in the slave States. In thus taking the responsibility of the act, they fully admitted that brutality, violence, and cowardly attempts at assassination are characters belonging naturally to slavery. A thrill of horror went through the civilized world on this occasion. All the free States felt themselves outraged. That an attempt should be made to kill in his seat a Northern man for words spoken in debate, was a gross insult and wrong to the nation, and deepened everywhere the detestation felt for the system.

But madness must have its perfect work. One more step remained to be taken by the slave power, and that was to claim the right, under the Constitution, and protected by the general government, to carry slaves and slavery into all the Territories. It was not enough that they were not prohibited by acts of Congress. They must not allow the people of the Territories to decide for themselves whether slavery should exist among them or not. It had a right to exist there, in spite of the people. A single man from South Carolina, going with his slaves into Nebraska, should have the

power of making that a slave State, though all the rest of its inhabitants wished it to be free. And if he was troubled by his neighbors, he had a right to call on the military power of the United States to protect him against them. Such was the doctrine of the Dred Scott case, such the doctrine accepted by the majority of the United States Senate under the lead of Jefferson Davis in the spring of 1859. Such was the doctrine demanded by the Southern members of the Democratic Convention in Charleston, S. C., in May, 1860, and failing to carry it, they broke up that convention. And it was because they were defeated in this purpose of carrying slavery into the Territories, that they seceded from the Union, and formed the Southern Confederacy.

They had gained a long succession of political triumphs, which we have briefly traced in this article. They had annexed Texas, and made another slave State of that Territory. They had established the principle that slavery was not to be excluded by law from any of the Territories of the nation. They had repealed the Missouri Compromise, passed the Fugitive-Slave Law, obtained the Dred Scott decision from the Supreme Court. In all this they had been aided by the Democratic party, and were sure of the continued help of that party. With these allies, they were certain to govern the country for a long period of years. The President, the Senate, the Supreme Court, were all on their side. As regarded slavery in the States, there was nothing to threaten its existence there. The Republicans proposed only to restrict it to the region where it actually existed, but could not and would not meddle with it therein. If the slave power had been satisfied with this, it seems probable that it might have retained its ascendancy in the country for a long period. An immense region was still open to its colonies. Cotton was still king, and the slaveholders possessed all the available cotton-growing regions. They were wealthy, they were powerful, they governed the nation. They threw all this power away by seceding from the Union. Why did they do this?

The frequent answer to this question is contained in the proverb, "Whom God would destroy he first makes mad." No doubt this act was one of madness, and no doubt it was

providential. But Providence works not by direct interference, but by maintaining the laws of cause and effect. Why did they become so mad? Why this supreme folly of relinquishing actual enormous power, in order to set their lives and fortunes on the hazard of a die?

It seems to be the doom of all vaulting ambition to overleap itself, and to fall on the other side. When Macbeth had gained all his ends, when he had become Thane of Cawdor and Glamis, and king, he had no peace because the succession had been promised to Banquo: —

“ Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If’t be so,
For *Banquo’s* issue have I filed my mind,
For *them* the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace.
. . . . To make *them* kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
And champion me to the utterance.”

When Napoleon the First was master of nearly all Europe, he could not be satisfied while England resisted his power, and Russia had not submitted to it. So *he* also said,

“ Rather than so, come fate into the list,
And champion me to the utterance.”

He also threw away all his immense power because he could not arrest his own course or limit his own demands on fate. Such ambitions cannot stop, so long as there is anything unconquered or unpossessed. “All this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.” The madness which seizes those greedy of power is like the passion of the gamester, who is unable to limit his desire of gain. By this law of insatiable ambition Providence equalizes destinies, and power is prevented from being consolidated in a few hands.

The motive which actuates these ambitions, and makes them think that nothing is gained so long as anything remains to be gained, seems to be a secret fear that they are in danger of losing all unless they can obtain more.

In the same way men of large wealth are harried by this fiend of accumulation. The richer they become, the stronger becomes their dread of growing poor. If a man holds his wealth as a trust, and uses it in that sense, he has no such terror; otherwise he seems to be living on a sandy foundation, and thinks that unless he continues to prop up his house, it may fall.

This inward dread appears to have possessed the hearts of the Southern slaveholders. Since slavery has been abolished, many of them admit that they have more content in their present poverty than they formerly had in their large possessions. They were then sensitive to every suggestion which touched their institution. Hence their persecution of Abolitionists, hence their cruelty to the slaves themselves,—for cruelty is often the child of fear. Hence the atrocity of the slave laws. Hence their desire to secure more and larger guaranties from the United States for their institution. Every rumor in the air troubled them. The fact that antislavery opinion existed at the North, that it was continually increasing, that a great political party was growing up which was opposed to their system, that such men as Garrison and Wendell Phillips existed in Boston, that Seward and Sumner were in the Senate,—all this was intolerable. The only way of accounting for Southern irritability, for Southern aggressions, for its perpetual demand for more power, is to be found in this latent terror. They doubted whether the foundations of their whole system were not rotten; they feared that it rested on falsehood and lies; they secretly felt that it was contrary to the will of God; an instinct in their souls told them that it was opposed to the spirit of the age and the laws of progress; and this fear made them frantic.

When men's minds are in this state, they are like the glass toy called a Rupert's bubble. A single scratch on the surface causes it to fly in pieces. The scratch on the surface of the slave system which caused it to rush into secession and civil war was the attempt of John Brown on Harper's Ferry. It seemed a trifle, but it indicated a great deal. It was the first drop of a coming storm. When one man was able to lay down his life, in a conflict with their system, with such courage

and nobleness, in a cause not his own, a shudder ran through the whole South. To what might this grow? And so they said, "Let us cut ourselves wholly off from these dreadful fanaticisms, from these terrible dangers. Let us make a community of our own, and shut out from it entirely all anti-slavery opinion, and live only with those who think as we do." And so came the end.

In reviewing Mr. Wilson's work, we have thus seen how it describes the gradual and simultaneous growth in the United States of two hostile powers, — one political, the other moral. The one continued to accumulate the outward forces which belong to organization; the other, the inward forces which are associated with enthusiasm. To use botanical language, the one was an Exogen, and the other an Endogen. The one added continually to its external strength by the passage of new laws, the addition of new territory, the more absolute control of parties, government, courts, the press, and the street. The other increased its power by accumulating an intenser conviction, a clearer knowledge, a firmer faith, and a more devoted consecration to its cause. The weapons of the one were force, adroitness, and worldly interest; those of the other, faith in God, in man, and in truth.

Great truths draw to their side noble auxiliaries. So it was with the antislavery movement. The heroism, the romance, the eloquence, the best literature, the grandest forms of religion, the most generous and purest characters, — all were brought to it by a sure affinity. As Wordsworth said to Toussaint l'Ouverture, so it might be declared here: —

"Thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exaltations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

The best poets of America, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, were in full sympathy with this cause, and their best poetry was their songs for freedom. Shall we ever forget the caustic humor of "Hosea Biglow," "Bird o' Fredum Sawin," and "John P. Robinson"? And how lofty a flight of inspiration did the same bard take, when he chanted in verses nobler, as it seems to us, than anything since Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality," the Return of the Heroes who had wrought salvation

for the dear land "bright beyond compare" among the nations!* What heroism, what tenderness, what stern rebuke, what noble satire, have attended every event in this long struggle, from the lyre of Whittier! Nothing in Campbell excels the ring of some of his trumpet-calls, nothing in Cowper the pathos of his elegies over the martyrs of freedom. The best men and the best women were always to be found at the meetings of the Antislavery Society. There were to be seen such upright lawyers as Ellis Gray Loring and Samuel E. Sewall and John A. Andrew, such eminent writers as Emerson, such great preachers as Theodore Parker and Beecher, such editors as Bryant and Greeley. To this cause did William Ellery Channing devote his last years and best thoughts. If the churches as organizations stood aloof, being only "timidly good," as organizations are apt to be, the purest of their body were sure to be found in this great company of latter-day saints.

Antislavery men had their faults. They were often unjust to their opponents, though unintentionally so. They were sometimes narrow and bitter; and with them, as with all very earnest people, any difference of opinion as to methods seemed to involve moral obliquity. But they were doing the great work of the age,—the most necessary work of all,—and much might be pardoned to their passionate love of justice and humanity. In their meetings could be heard many of the ablest speakers of the time, and one, the best of all. He held the silver bow of Apollo, and dreadful was its clangor when he launched its shafts against spiritual wickedness in high places. Those deadly arrows were sometimes misdirected, and occasionally they struck good men who were meaning to do their duty. Such errors, we suppose, are incident to all who are speaking and acting in such terrible earnest. It is not probable that Luther was always just to his opponents, nor Paul; in the great day of accounts many mistakes will have to be rectified. But surely among the goodly company of apostles and

* Recently, in a hasty mood, this great poet has called our country "The Land of broken Promise." Has he so soon forgotten the last lines of his own immortal poem, where he says to this nation:—

"We will not dare to doubt thee.

But ask whatever else, and we will dare"?

prophets, and in the noble array of martyrs there assembled, few will be found more free from the sins of selfish interest and personal ambition than those who in Congress, in the pulpit, on the platform, or with the pen, fought the great battle of American freedom.

One great moral must be drawn from this story before we close. It demonstrates, by a great historical proof, that no evil however mighty, no abuse however deeply rooted, can resist the power of truth faithfully uttered and steadily applied. If this great institution of slavery, resting on such a foundation of enormous pecuniary interest, buttressed by such powerful supports, fell in the life of a single generation before the unaided power of truth, why should we ever despair? Henceforth, whenever a mighty evil is to be assailed, or a cruel despotism overthrown, men will look to this history of the greatness and decadence of slavery; and, so encouraged, will believe that God is on the side of justice, and that truth will always prevail against error.

But to this we must add, that it is only where free institutions exist that truth has full power in such a conflict. We need free speech, a free press, free schools, and free churches, in order that truth shall have a free course. The great advantage of a republic like ours is, that it gives to truth a fair chance in its conflict with error. The Southern States would long ago have abolished slavery if it had possessed such institutions. But, though republican in form, the Southern States were in reality an oligarchy, in which five millions of whites and three millions of slaves were governed by the absolute and irresponsible power of less than half a million of slaveholders. Freedom was permitted by them except when this institution was concerned, then it was absolutely forbidden. No book written against their peculiar institution could be printed on any Southern press or sold in any Southern bookstore. No newspaper attacking slavery was allowed to be circulated through Southern mails. No public meeting could be held to discuss the right and wrong of slavery. No minister could preach against the system. No man could express, even in conversation, his hostility to it, without risk of personal injury. An espionage as sharp and an inquisition as relentless as those

of Venice or Spain, governed society, at least in the cotton and sugar States of the Union. But at the North opinion was free, and therefore slavery fell. This is the great merit of republican institutions. The process of making and changing opinions is distasteful to many who call themselves conservatives, but who belong to that class who, as Armand Carrel said, would, if they had lived at the epoch of creation, have cried out, “*Mes amis, conservons le chaos!*” These are the conservatives who are so displeased with the noise of escaping steam that they would fasten down the safety-valve and so cause an explosion. Fisher Ames compressed in an epigram the evil and good of republican institutions. “In a monarchy,” said he, “we are in a ship, very comfortable while things go well; but strike a rock, and we go to the bottom. In a republic, we are on a raft; our feet are wet, and it is not always agreeable, but we are safe.” It is a lasting proof of the conservative power of free institutions, that they were able to uproot such a system as slavery by creating a moral force capable of putting it down; that they could carry us through a civil war, still leaving the press and speech free; that they stood the strain of a Presidential election without taking from the voters a single right; and so, at last, conquered a rebellion on so vast a scale that every European monarchy, with its immense standing army, would have been powerless in its presence. Let those Americans who are disposed to disparage their own institutions bear this history in mind. We have evils here, and great ones; but they come at once to the surface, and therefore can be met by the power of intelligent opinion and overcome. So it has always been in the past; so it will be, God aiding us, in the future. We are about to meet the Centennial Anniversary of our national life; and on that day we can look back to our fathers, the founders of the Republic, and say to them — “You gave us the inestimable blessing of free institutions; we have used those institutions to destroy the only great evil which you transmitted to us untouched. We now can send down the Republic to our children, pure from this stain, and capable of enduring IN SECUA SECLORUM.”

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.